

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

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FM AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4918
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L NAIROBI 14386

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS, KE, UR
SUBJECT: SOVIET AMBASSADOR ON MILITARY SALES TO KENYA

REF: (A) NAIROBI 14233 (NOTAL), (B) STATE 308019 (NOTAL)

1. SOVIET AMBASSADOR MIROSHNICHENKO'S REMARK THAT
SOVIET-SUPPLIED ARMS IN UGANDA AND SOMALIA WOULD NOT BE USED
AGAINST KENYA WAS RESPONSE TO PRESS QUESTIONING AT PRESS
CONFERENCE DEVOTED TO LEONID IL'ICH'S SEVENTIETH BIRTHDAY.
QUESTIONS HARKED BACK TO SIMILAR ASSURANCES SOVIET
AMBASSADOR HAD REPORTEDLY GIVEN TO MFA IN NOVEMBER, WHEN
HE WAS CHALLENGED TO RECONCILE ARMS SHIPMENTS TO KENYA'S
NEIGHBORS WITH PIOUS STATEMENTS ABOUT SOVIET WORLDWIDE
ARMS CONTROL OBJECTIVES.

2. THERE ARE CONFLICTING REPORTS ABOUT WHAT MIROSHNICHENKO

ACTUALLY SAID. AFP CORRESPONDENT IS AWAY FROM NAIROBI, BUT
KENYAN EMPLOYEE IN HIS OFFICE TOLD PAO THAT SOVIET AMBASSADOR
HAD INDEED ASSERTED THAT KENYA HAD BOUGHT ARMS FROM USSR.
NEWSMEN ASSUMED THIS WAS REFERENCE TO SHIPMENT OF USED
ARMS IN EARLY YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE, WHICH WERE
SUBSEQUENTLY REJECTED AS BEING OF INFERIOR QUALITY.
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ON OTHER HAND, RELIABLE KENYAN NEWSMEN FROM NAIROBI
DAILY NATION WHO WAS PRESENT AT PRESS CONFERENCE SAYS
MIROSHNICHENKO MADE NO REFERENCE TO SOVIET SALES OF
ARMS TO KENYA; WHAT HE DID SAY WAS THAT KENYA HERSELF
WAS ACQUIRING ARMS FROM VARIOUS COUNTRIES. NEITHER OF
THESE TWO VERSIONS WAS REPORTED IN LOCAL PRESS, ALTHOUGH

BOTH DAILIES GAVE PROMINENCE TO AMBASSADOR'S STATEMENT
THAT UGANDA AND SOMALIA WOULD NOT USE SOVIET WEAPONS
AGAINST KENYA.

3. SINCE SOVIETS HAVE REGULARLY ASSURED KENYANS THAT
UGANDA AND SOMALIA ARE PLEDGED NOT TO USE SOVIET ARMS
AGAINST NEIGHBORS, AND REMAINDER OF PRESS CONFERENCE
WAS BOILERPLATE, WE DID NOT REPORT IT AT LENGTH.
EXCEPT FOR ABORTIVE SOVIET SHIPMENT OF ARMS DURING
1960'S KENYA HAS NOT PURCHASED ANY SOVIET WEAPONS
(ALTHOUGH THERE HAVE REPORTEDLY BEEN SOVIET EFFORTS AS
RECENTLY AS 1975). WE HAVE CONFIRMED THIS WITH PERMSEC
OF MOD ON DEC 22.
MARSHALL

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